



THE KEJAMAN *Language*

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AMEE JOAN
QUELYNE EKOT

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Language

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Language

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE	xi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	xii
 CHAPTER 1 THE KEJAMAN OF BELAGA, SARAWAK	 1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Population	3
1.3 Labour Organisation	5
1.4 Economy	7
 CHAPTER 2 PHONOLOGICAL AND MORPHOLOGICAL PROPERTIES	 9
2.0 Introduction	9
2.1 Phonology	10
2.1.1 Vowels	10
2.1.2 Consonants	11
2.1.3 Evidence of Vowels	11

2.2 MORPHOLOGY	15
2.2.1 Numerals	15
2.2.2 Numerals Classifiers	16
2.2.3 Frequency	16
2.2.4 Ordinals	16
2.2.5 Nouns	16
2.2.6 Pronouns	18
2.2.7 Verbs	18
 CHAPTER 3 SOCIAL EXPRESSIONS	 23
3.0 Introduction	23
3.1 Introducing One Self And Introducing Others	23
3.2 Greetings	24
3.3 Enquiring Personal Matters And Asking About Well-Being	25
3.4 Making Apologies	25
3.5 Farewells	26
3.6 Giving Compliments	26
3.7 Talking About The Weather	27
3.8 At The Eateries	27
3.9 At The Clinics	28
 CHAPTER 4 PICTURE DICTIONARY	 29
Ba'dliu: Dunia: World	30
Lagua: Tubuh: Body	31
Leveuk Dareu: Rumah: Parts of a house	35
Kakeh Dapun: Alat-alat Dapur: Kitchen Items	37
Kakeh ju'eu: Alat-alat Rumah: Household Items	40
Kakeh cepak: Tepak Sirih: Items connected to Chewing and Smoking	41
Ba'reang Men: Senjata Besi: Knives	42

Kakeh Adui: Perkakas Kerja: Tools	43
Kakeh Adui: Perkakas Kerja: Tools for paddy farming	45
Bagi Cei: Bahagian Binatang: Animal parts	46
Cei Kudz'ueng : Ternakan: Domestic Animals	47
Cei I'pueng: Binatang Liar: Wild Animals	49
Cei Danum: Binatang Air: Water Animals	51
Anek Uran: Burung: Birds	53
Cei ni'dlip: Serangga: Insects	54
Cei magau: Serangga Tidak Terbang: Non Flying Insects/Small Creatures	55
Cei ni'dlip: Serangga yang Terbang: Flying Insects	56
Pud'lah: Tanaman: Crops	57
Led'lah : Sayur-sayuran: Vegetables	59
Beguak: Buah-buahan: Fruits	61
Kakeh Manak Jen: Alat Penangkap Ikan: Fishing Equipment	64
Kueh: Kuih Muih: Various Cakes	67
Bareang nanyam: Anyaman: Woven Items	69
Bareang Mujik: Alat-alat Muzik: Musical Instruments	70
Beraeng gedeang: Alat-alat Bertitik: Percussion Instruments	71
REFERENCES	73
INDEX	75

PREFACE

This wordlist picture dictionary for Kejaman language contains 246 words. Each word is translated into both Bahasa Malaysia and English. The wordlist is divided into 25 sub lists: *world, parts of human body, parts of a house, kitchen items, household items, items connected to chewing and smoking, knives, tools, parts of animals, domestic animals, wild animals, water animals, birds, insects, insects/small creatures, non-flying insects/small creatures, flying insects, crops, vegetables, fruits, fishing equipment, various cakes, woven items, musical instrument and percussion instrument*. The sub lists are arranged in the order of most frequently used words to the least used words by the Kejaman community in their daily interactions. In the effort to preserve this ethnic language, the book is written in such a way that adults, as well as, children may find it resourceful for their reference and daily use. It is hoped that readers of this book will gain some insights of the language as well as the Kejaman ethnic of Belaga, Sarawak. Fellow ethnic language researchers may also use this book as a reference material for future studies in related area. At the point of writing this book, it appears that this could be the first wordlist picture dictionary for the Kejaman language.

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Amee Joan

CHAPTER 1

THE KEJAMAN OF BELAGA, SARAWAK

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Kejaman ethnic can only be found in Sarawak and it is one of the smallest ethnic groups in the state. They are considered as one of the most endangered ethnic groups in Sarawak due to its small population: about 1200 speakers at Rumah Kejaman Neh, Long Liten (Joan, 2013). The Kejaman ethnic are currently residing in two prominent longhouses; Rumah Kejaman Dajah Liten, and Rumah Kejaman Ba' Segaham (Lasah) in Belaga. The Kejaman belonged to a very small, aristocratically organized sub-group of the Melanau (The Borneo Research Council, 1970). In terms of general properties of the social structure, the Kejaman resembles other stratified groups in Central Borneo in distinguishing nobility (laja), commoners (panin) and slaves (dipen). In this respect, the degree of discrimination appears to be less complicated than among the Kayan, Kenyah, or Kelabit. However, in terms of culture and traditions, they are more similar to the Sekapan, Lahanan, and Punan or Penan Busang.

The Kejaman is a good example of a community with strong ethnic identity. Although they live among a large number of other ethnic groups such as the Iban, Kayan, and Kenyah, they keep their own traditions and

use their own dialect within the community. Based on Omar's (1982) survey, the Kejaman language falls between the Kayan and Melanau in grammatical structure. According to Lewis (2009), from a linguist point of view, the Kejaman speaks a language which is closely related on lexical grounds to Lahanan, Kanowit, Berawan, Punan Bah, Punan Biau, and the dialects of coastal Melanau, which together form a Rejang-Baram group. Like many other ethnic languages in Sarawak, the Kejaman language has no written form and is mainly used orally in the daily routines of the people.

However, when the Kejaman communicate with other ethnic groups, they normally use the other ethnic's language or dialect. They switch to other ethnic dialects such as Iban, Kayan, Kenyah, or other languages such as Bahasa Melayu or English. Consequently, many of the Kejaman are often bilingual and multilingual (Joan, 2013). This is because the Kejaman have the perceptions that other people will not understand them if they speak in their own language. This seems to indicate a negative perception of the Kejaman dialect. Joan's (2013) study on the language vitality and the speakers' attitude towards their language, through observation of social events and migration of youngsters found that the respondents in the study are shifting away from their mother tongue and going through the language attrition phase. Additionally, in the recent years, there has been inter-marriage between Kejaman and the local Sekapan, Kayan, and Kenyah. Due to the marriage pattern and economy in the recent years, the Kejaman population has decreased and the linguistic situation within the present Kejaman community has changed. Among the Kejaman, about two thirds of existing marriages occurred within this group alone, fewer than 20% involving non-Kajang individuals, suggesting a clear endogamous tendency (Strickland, 1995).

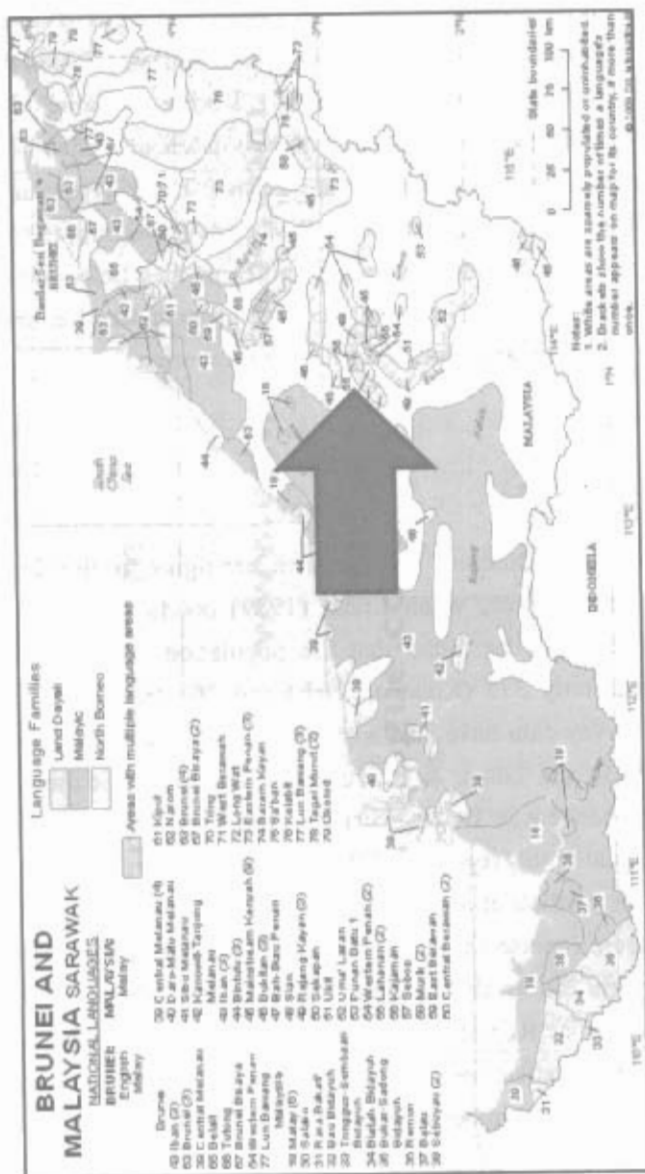
Historically, the Kejaman has been settling at the Sungai Kajang settlements since early seventeenth century. In the olden days, their leader is called "laja levou". The Kejaman can be considered as genocide

survivors (Joan, 2013) because the Kejaman women and children survived the civil war (happened between the year 1841 to 1941) when they were sent to the mountains and hid under the sacred cave called the "Batu Kalev'et". Unfortunately, many Kejaman men were killed during the civil war (between the years 1841-1941). During the James Brooke era (1841-1941), the Kejaman was the only group that agreed to help the Kayans when they were attacked by the British. The Kayans had also sought help from the Sihan, Sekapan, and other neighbouring tribes, but without success. The Kejaman ethnic is unique as they belonged to the group of people who engage or used to engage in secondary treatment of the dead and in the construction of tomb post (Keliering).

1.2 POPULATION

In terms of population, there is no exact accurate figure for the Kejaman community. For instance, when Luhut (1989) conducted a study on the Kejaman in 1986, he found that the population for the Kejaman community was only 372 (Kejaman Neh) and 263 (Kejaman Lasah). More recent survey data have also somewhat inconsistent, for example, Mohamad (1991) and Ghani & Ridzuan (1992) found that there were 500 Kejaman speakers in Belaga. Strickland (1995), during the course of his study, updated this report in 1995 and documented that there were 635 Kejaman in the district of Belaga. A year later, researchers from The Sarawak Museum reported an increased in the number of Kejaman- 734 Kejaman speakers (Sarawak Museum, 1993). In 2013, Joan (2013) had conducted a study at Rumah Neh Long Liten and reported that there were about 1200 Kejaman residing at the longhouse. Unfortunately, she could not get the exact number of population at Rumah Kejaman Lasah.

The Location of the Kejaman



(Adapted from: Lewis, M. Paul (ed.), 2009. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, Sixteenth edition, Dallas, Tex.: SIL International. Online version: <http://www.ethnologue.com/>.)

1.3 LABOUR ORGANISATION

The description of labour organisation is based on the material which was written by Strickland in 1989 during his extensive fieldwork. The account of the labour organisation is necessary to be included here as it had played a significant role in the lives of the Kejaman in the past.

In terms of labour organisation, the Kejaman are similar to the other races in Sarawak. In the olden days, apart from the individual working alone, four types of labour arrangement were identified. The formed term 'panjup' was a form of reciprocal work exchange system in which the contributions could be logged on a household basis. Among the Kejaman, individuals from any given household could substitute for each other where possible. This form of labour was widely used during the establishment of rubber gardens, house building, clearing, planting, weeding and harvesting of rice. This type of labour was distinct from the term 'gotong-royong', done for the community as a whole, for there was no communal focus under 'panjup' but only the property of each participating household.

Another form of work, called 'nua' was that in which an individual contributed his labour in return for payment in cash or kind, as for example during a harvest. This could be combined with 'panjup' in the following way; a reciprocal labour exchange team could consist of, for example, ten households each with their own field. Each household would contribute one worker but an extra worker would be invited to be the eleventh although he had no field of his own and therefore no direct means of benefitting from 'panjup'. A twelfth household would then provide a field for the extra worker, so that the team could work on it. Since the twelfth household would not itself contribute any labour to the team, it would have to pay for the work done on the field, usually by giving harvested grain to the eleventh worker in proportion to the number of workers in the team: at about 2 gantang or 12 kg of unhusked rice per

worker this would amount to 132 kg rice. Everyone would benefit from this arrangement: the team would have an extra worker for its entire field, the worker would receive a payment, and the twelfth household would benefit from their labour without contributing its own.

The third form of work was free help 'tulgun'. This was usually given at life crises alone and was sharply distinguished from the other forms. There was a tacit assumption that future assistance would be given in return should it be sought.

The final form of work arrangement is called the 'map'- in which commoners (pajin) would provide labour to the longhouse head at his demand. This could be for working his fields or making his rooms in the longhouse.

In the past, there were divisions of labour between children and adults, and between the sexes. The division of labour between the sexes was marked: felling trees, fishing, boat and house building, sago collection and hunting solely undertaken by men; tobacco and coffee harvesting, shrimping, basket making, feeding chickens and pigs being performed only by the women. A similar pattern was found among the children of each sex, although the overall range of tasks was smaller in this case. The degree of substitutability of each sex at different tasks appeared to be high, although this table does not take account of the relative contributions made by each in any given task. There may have been significant historical changes in the overall pattern observed. It was said that women use to process sago but this was reported no longer to be the case in 1984 (Strickland, 1995).

For the Kejaman, hill rice land was subject to rules of inheritance. Both sexes could inherit the land. Most landed property was inherited by the individual direct descendants of the holder, usually a daughter, who remained in the longhouse room into which she was born while other

siblings left. New land rights could be created by clearing previously unworked forest.

There have undoubtedly changes in the local economy of Belaga District over the past decade. This is partly a consequence of the advent of timber extraction in the Upper Balui, and partly the result of the recent decision to embark upon the Bakun hydro-electricity scheme.

1.4 ECONOMY

In the household economy, in the olden days, the Kejaman depends on the slash-and-burn cultivation of dry hill rice together with sago exploitation, the horticulture of a variety of vegetables and root crops, gathering, hunting and fishing. The basic crop was hill paddy grown in shifting cultivation, completed by a broad variety of other cash crops such as maize, cucumbers, pumpkins, beans, tapioca, bananas, rambutan, betel and illipe nuts, coffee, tobacco and sugar-particularly for their own consumption. Some folks reared pigs and poultry. At times, they go hunting and fishing as their longhouses are located near the rivers. Most villagers owned boats and fire-weapons for hunting. A longer term perspective suggests that the Kejaman is in the transitional phase between essential dependence on the sago palm and root horticulture, and dependence on rice as their primary staple food.

Nowadays, due to social mobility, not many Kejaman continue with its self-sufficient economy. At present, many Kejaman youngsters leave their longhouses in search for better lives in the cities. Most of them work with the government and private sectors. They will only return to their village during festive occasions like Christmas Day, All Souls Day, and also during the funerals of their relatives and friends (Joan, 2013).

CHAPTER 2

PHONOLOGICAL AND MORPHOLOGICAL PROPERTIES

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The Kejaman language falls between the Kayan and the Melanau in grammatical structure (Omar, 1982). In terms of lexical, the Kejaman language is rather similar to the language of the Lahanan, the Kanowit, the Berawan, the Punan Bah, the Punan Biau, and also the dialects of coastal Melanau (Lewis 2009). The kejaman language, like many other ethnic languages in Sarawak, is mainly used orally in the daily routines of the people and to date, the Kejaman language has no written form (Joan, 2013).

This chapter describes the main phonological and the morphological properties of the Kejaman language. We would like to especially acknowledge the work done by S.S. Strickland in the year 1995 in this chapter as he had initiated the study for the Kejaman language. Most of the materials in this chapter are adopted and adapted from the special monograph entitled "The Materials for the Study of Kejaman-Sekapan Oral Tradition" which was written by S.S. Strickland in the year 1995.

2.1 PHONOLOGY

Phonology deals with the description of sounds and their functions in a certain language (Omar, 1981). The following is the description of the main phonological properties of the Kejaman language. It includes some examples of the vowels, consonants, evidence of vowels, the obstruent, nasals, fricatives, median approximants, laterals, trill and glides dictated in the Kejaman language.

The phonemics and orthographical conventions:

ə = schwa (mid-to low-central unrounded)

β = bilabial voiced fricative

ŋ = velar nasal

ɬ = palatal voiced lateral fricative

ɾ = voiceless palatal fricative

c = alveolar-palatal affricate

ɔ = mid-to-low back, rounded

The conventions are used for the following provisional phonemic orthography:

2.1.1 Vowels

/i/, /e/, /ə/, /a/, /ɔ/, /u/

In clusters:

/ia/, /iu/, /ui/, /ua/, /au/, /ae/, /ea/, /ai/, /ue/, /iə/, /əu/

2.1.2 Consonants

/p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/, /g/, /m/, /n/, /ɲ/, /ŋ/, /β/, /c/, (for some loans also /s/) /y/, /h/, /w/, /j/, /l/, /ʒ/, /r/

2.1.3 Evidence for vowels

This is justified as follows:

INITIAL	MEDIAL	FINAL	GLOTTALIZED
cardinals			
/i/ /ica/he or she	/pikin/ think	/ŋali/ irritating	/baŋi/ back
/e/ /e/ that	/yeŋ/serpent /dɔŋ/thought	/kəle/cassava	/ake/ grandparent
/a/ /ake/ grandparent	/paray/ unhusked rice	/ba/ husked rice	/gã/ emphatic
/ɔ/	/ɔkɔ/ tobacco	/mutɔ/ motor	/udɔ/ design
/u/ /uŋəw/ head	/buʔan/ fruit	/bəcu/replete	/ayu/ at
clusters			
/ia/		/cia/ personal name	
/iu/		/baŋiu/ country	
/ui/	/nuin/ personal name	/cui/ type of bird	
/ua/		/tua/ unmarried	
/au/	/bəlaut/ pull out	/bau/ personal name	
/ae/	/aen/ personal name		
/ai/		/bai/ loin cloth	
/ue/		/cue/ type of dance	
/eã/		/iŋe ã/ large knife	
/iə/	/liəp/ curse		
/əu/	/kəutan/ mangosteen		

The glottal separates like and unlike vowels :

/jaʔat/ 'bad', /kaʔuŋ/ 'size', /laʔəy/ 'language', /paʔit/ 'bitter', /caʔəw/ 'to go down river', /tiʔah/ 'caterpillar', /buʔan/ 'fruit', /kəbuʔən/ 'flirtatious', /pəʔipah/ 'couple', /məʔəʔ/ 'light coloured', /piʔiʔ/ 'chorus', /buʔut/ 'afraid'.

All final vowels are phonetically long in Kejaman. Vowel plus glottal stop finally is also phonetically long, except that length is contrastive on the low front /a/ so /tāʔ/ 'nothing' and /taʔ/ 'raw' are distinct. The prevalence of vowel clusters suggests that the long /a/ should be written /aa/; however for simplicity all vowels are written as single vowels except that the short /a/ is distinguished as /ā/ word-finally.

Vowels of the final syllable/CVn/ are phonetically long except for the schwa vowel; they are subject to pronominal suffixation by the rules applying to items in /-Cah/, /-Ci/, /-Ca/, /-Cw/, /-Cəw/ and /-Cəy/.

The front-and back-closing forms are phonemically distinct from the clusters, as represented in the orthography. Intervocalic non-syllabic vocoids phonetically representable as [y] or [ɜ] and [w] also occur. These overlap phonetically with /y/ and /β/ in word-initial and -medial positions. There is evidence for /w/ as a distinct phoneme in /wah/ 'not': /βah/ 'to flick' and /paw/ 'individual': /ləβa/ 'do not'. This orthography adopts /i/ and /u/ in the clusters and /w/ and /y/ as glides. The labialized released in [gwah], [ligwət] and other terms, is maintained. Neither [-gwi] nor [-kuy] rhyme exactly with [cui] and the diphthongal is distinguished from the cluster orthographically.

The open mid-low back[ɔ] appears to be a loan-phoneme and not naturally occurring in Kejaman: [ləkɔ:ʔ] 'tobacco', [udɔ:ʔ] 'design', [pəjɔh] 'directly', [bələh] 'mere', [kɔh] emphatic particle. The argument is based on the following:

Free variation of [ɔ] and [u] in word-initial place before consonants as in [uran] and [ɔran];

Free variation in word-final place before the glottal, as in [naju:ʔ] and [nalɔ:ʔ], [lalɔ:ʔ] and [lalu:ʔ]

the variation observed in (ii) contrasts with the persistent forms [udɔ:ʔ] and [kələŋɔ:ʔ] which (in the former case) were said to differ only in length from Kenyah [udɔʔ], [bulɔʔ] which have no exact rhymes in Kejaman;

the series of short breathy terms in [-ɔh] occur in complementary distribution, there being no forms *[-uh], which suggests either that a phoneme /u/ becomes phonetically [ɔ] in the environment [C-h] or that there is a loan phoneme /ɔ/ in the terms listed.

The evidence that these terms are loans is reasonably clear for [ləkɔ:ʔ] M ləkək, [udɔ:ʔ] Kenyah [udɔʔ], [pəjɔh] Kenyah [pəjɔ]; though it can be added that some Kenyah terms in [-ɔʔ] occur as [-əwʔ] in Kejaman ([inɔʔ] and [inəwʔ] 'bead'; and a case can be made for writing /əw/ as /o/.

Obstruents

INITIAL	MEDIAL	FINAL
Stops and plosives		
/p/ /pəŋah/ completed action	/ləpaw/ hut	/kaʔarəp/ different
/b/ /bələh/ mere	/abu/ emphatic particle	
/t/ /tanəʔ/ land	/atu/ personal time	/pət/ chop
/d/ /dəgwah/ two	/idət/ decorative term	
/k/ /kəŋwah/ you two	/ikaw/ you (singular)	/dik/ chicken
/g/ /garəy/ clothing	/agət/ not yet	
/ʔ/	/buʔan/ fruit	/udsʔ/ design

Nasals

/m/ /məŋəʔ/ await	/kəman/ eat	/maŋam/ night
/n/ /nəməyʔ/ make	/inəy/ this	/lucan/ arrive
/p/ /pəŋaw/ seek	/pəŋin/ commoner	
/ŋ/ /ŋuβun/ morning	/buŋa/ flower	/tuŋ/ Jew's harp

Fricatives

/β/ /βah/ flick	/ŋuβun/ morning	
/c/ /cirah/ they	/ica/ he/she	/neruc/ personal name
/h/		/kupah/ how?

Median approximants

/j/ /juʔay/ go upriver	/ujep/ spear
------------------------	--------------

Laterals

/l/ /law/ really	/kalaw/ type of tuber
/ɭ/ /ɭaw/ day	/laɭ/ type of tree

Trill

/r/ /rəʔ/ personal name	/murip/ live
-------------------------	--------------

Glides

/w/ /wah/ not	/ŋawa/ individual
/y/ /juʔ/ small	/ajuʔ/ at

2.2 MORPHOLOGY

Morphology is the study of the internal structure of a word (Omar, 1981). The description of the Kejaman language morphological properties will include the numerals, numeral classifiers, frequency, ordinals, nouns and pronouns, verbs (bases and modified forms) and last but not least, the systematic changes from transitive to focused forms.

2.2.1 Numerals

The numerals from one to ten are as follows:

1 Jah	6 nem
2 dægwa/deguah	7 tujuk
3 təʒəw	8 aʒan
4 pat	9 juʒan
5 limah	10 puluʔən

The system of counting follows the decimal form used in Iban and Malay. This combines **puluʔən** and a single digit to express 11-19; and uses **puʒu** (Malay: puluh) following a single digit to express 20-90. The term for 100 **tu** or **atu** (Malay: ratus), usually elides with the preceding numeral.

2.2.2 Numeral Classifiers

Kejaman uses at least seven:

l̥gat	For sheets of paper or flimsy items
titiŋ	For longhouses
luʔun	For globular objects or fruits
uŋ	For any item animate or inanimate
diʔah	For plots of land
bəʔah	For items of dress
jan	For families or households

2.2.3 Frequency

The term **ligwət**, **likan** or **lukan** is used following numerals to specify frequency.

2.2.4 Ordinals

The single term **uruj** means 'first', 'nose'; subsequent items use a relative construction of the kind **cadəgwah** or **oãʔtəʔəw** where **oãʔ** corresponds to Iban **ke** and Malay **yang**.

2.2.5 Nouns

The following are examples of nouns which include the name of the days and also numbers one (1) to ten (10).